

2006

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DIT: Students' Union

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the compact



05

1ST FEBRUARY 2006

dit students union

RAG Week

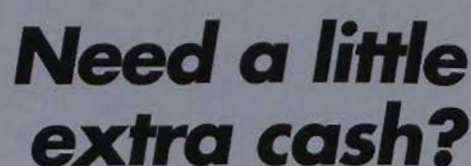
Elections

S.H.A.G.
Week

Well Fair
Week

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Fancy yourself as a Sudoku Master?



Once you have completed the puzzles, drop them into your Student's Union office, addressed to **Compact Irish Independent, DIT Sodoko Competition, Att. Ciara Spelman.**

Irish Independent

Ireland's National Quality Daily



Welcome back everyone and I hope the exams went ok for you all.

There has been a lot going in the college while you have all been keeping your heads in the books studying for exams.

The main story this edition is a Grangegorman exclusive as we reveal to the students of DIT the new proposed university style campus that is to be put into action in just a short time with the Grangegorman Development Agency being given the green light.

This year's Rag Week will be held on 13th - 16th February. All the proceeds from the Rag week will be going to Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) so check out page 16 & 17 and see how you can get involved during the Rag Week to help raise money for a worthy cause.

I would also like to take this chance to encourage more writers to get involved in the magazine whatever your interests and experience.

We are particularly looking for people in the field of sports who want to report on games in DIT so please get in touch.

I would also like to thank all the contributors who made a great effort to get their copy in on time during a stressful exam period.

Until next time.

Cormac Cahill, Editor.
compact@mitsu.ie
Tel: (01) 402 46 54



And now for the folksy welcome bit....

So what's going on in DIT this month I hear you ask? After the stress of sitting exams and handing in all those assignments we bring you a month of fun, frolics and festivities.

As this is the first week back we decided here at DITSU that it was time we all turned to thoughts of health and well-being. So this week we have the 'Well Fair'. Look out for the stands and collect the information about how you can become a healthy, happy and relaxed student this semester.

Starting on the 13th of February, DITSU proudly presents both RAG and SHAG Week 2006.

Remember RAG is about 'Raising and Giving' to a brilliant charity, which this year is the Central Remedial Clinic. There's a packed calendar of events planned. The highlights include Loveabalooza and the BIGGEST RAG TRIP EVER! Get involved and give generously.

And yes it's also SHAG week (sexual health and guidance week). We felt that RAG week was the perfect time to remind you guys to practice safe sex. So look out for the stands and get your free condom.

But wait there's more. If you would like to do your bit for the students of DIT, nominations open for the DIT Students' Union election of sabbatical officers on the 17th and close on the 24th of February. Go on, you know you want too.

Bernadette Farrell,
Vice-President
Student Academic Affairs.

the compact

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THE COMPACT TEAM:

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Cormac Cahill

SUB-EDITOR

Eoghan Morrissey

ASSISTANT SUB-EDITOR

Valerie Farrell

NEWS EDITOR

David White

SPORTS EDITOR

Andrew Hussey

FASHION EDITORS

Lili Forberg & Louise Conlon

FEATURE WRITERS

Niamh Ingoldsby, Andrew Deegan and Sharon Vogiatzi.

ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS

Emma Cawley & Alys Harte

FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

Lili Forberg & Miriam O'Connor

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

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RAG TRIP

THURS. 16TH FEB.
TICKETS €30

ON SALE 7TH FEB. IN S.U. SHOPS



dit students' union
www.ditsu.ie/events

rag⁰⁶



UNITED
TRAVEL

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10.11.06
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Central
Remedial
Clinic



DIT Fundraiser Courtesy of Santa Claus

COLLEGE NEWS

BY SANTA CLAUS

Dear Students,

I just wanted to drop a note to let you all know about the wonderful day I recently spent in Bolton Street. At 11 am I arrived in my sleigh which was drawn, as always, by my dear friend Rudolph.

After a short tour of Bolton St. just to remind myself of whose been naughty etc. (it's been a while since I've seen most of you after all!) I settled into my grotto with Mrs. Claus, who incidentally had travelled separately as flying with Rudolph tends to make her ill.

Little had I realised that big plans had been made to entertain me for the day, for all of a sudden forty red shirted carol singers appeared on the stage to perform a few Christmassy songs to get us all in the mood for a party. This was most excellent and helped settle the mince pies I had eaten on the journey. These were followed by the wonderful Juggling Society who dazzled all and sundry with their absurd circus trickery. Break-dance Society was the next up, I wasn't entirely sure as to how festive these were, but needless to say they went down a storm with both the crowd and myself.

However all was not well at the grotto. Several unconfirmed reports reached me that my arch-nemesis, "The Bad Santa", had been spotted loitering within the canteen and eyeing up my lovely Mrs. Claus at the entrance to the grotto. (Now while it is commonly recognised that the Grinch is my main adversary, you can understand how difficult it can be to find a Grinch outfit, so Bad Santa had to do for Bolton St.). So I had no choice, but to send brave Rudolph out to risk life and limb to banish him. Once that was done and dusted and order restored, Rudolph returned to giving rides in his sleigh and Bad Santa was escorted from the premises (but I do not believe I've seen the last of him).

Now, as the afternoon was drawing to a close, with my belly full of the sumptuous Turkey dinner laid for me by

the Canteen Staff and my journey back to the North Pole drawing nearer and nearer, I was surprised in the grotto by two of my beautiful young elves, who had stowed away aboard my sleigh. (I had a feeling something was afoot, as Rudolph had mentioned that the sleigh seemed heavier than usual and was pulling to the left, but I had put it down to laziness and headwinds over the Outer Hebrides).

Needless to say, I was livid with them, as they both know they are forbidden to leave the North Pole without my permission.....they were a pair of very naughty elves. But they managed to redeem themselves. Knowing I would be angry, they had taken it upon themselves to collect money for The Children's Medical Research Foundation which is a part of Our Ladies Hospital for Sick Children, in Crumlin. I was delighted, as it is one of my favourite charities, and I travel there every single Christmas to visit all of the wonderful children. Between the two of them, plus of course Rudolph... who has always had a thing for the elves...silly boy, they raised 1,130 euro and passed it over to the Students Union to donate it on their behalf, I was very proud of them and all those who got involved and gave their time, support and of course money to this very worthy cause. Well done to all of you.

Well now to the end of my writings, Mrs. Claus has my dinner ready, and time has come for me to begin my list of who has been naughty and who has been nice. I shall be very busy this year, but one thing is certain, next December I shall return to Bolton St. for what I believe will be another fantastic Christmas.

Inset: DITSU President Bob Coggins and the lads receive the cheque for the fundraiser in Bolton Street.



Buddy System Buddies in DIT

The Buddy System- a fantastic opportunity to get involved! Meet new people! Make new friends! Get to know what's going on!

UNION NEWS

BY BERNADETTE FARRELL

Starting out in college can be difficult. Becoming familiar with the campus, getting to grips with all those new subjects, finding your feet in a new place, new people, and new surroundings. There is so much to take in and so little time, in a busy and sometimes hectic atmosphere. Before you know it, assignments are due, rent is to be paid again and you've only got to grips with whereabouts of the lecture halls.

Adapting to college is not easy and it's a whole new independence, routine and life experience. The aim of the 'Buddy System' is to bring students together in a supportive environment, creating new friendships and a network of people to grow with. It is a fantastic opportunity for you to get to know other students, new people in similar circumstances. It is also a chance to meet those estab-

lished students and bend their ear with any queries that you may have. It is an opportunity to share experiences, learn from others, become more informed on the services available, and most importantly, have a good cup of tea and a few biscuits while your at it!

Every student from everywhere is encouraged to get on board and be part of this exciting campaign. This is your chance to bring your life experience and share it with others. For new students particularly, this is an ideal opportunity to get informed on what's going on, enquire about site issues, any course or general student issues that you may have.

Buddy System events will be held throughout the semester and groups will be created ideally per course or per site to suit those getting to grips with the in's and out's! So get involved and call to your local Union office, to sign up with the Buddy System. There will be Buddy evening launch early in Semester two and everybody's welcome so keep a look out for the posters.

For more information: please contact Bernadette (VP) or Aimee at DIT Students' Union, Student Affairs Department on 402 4510.

DIT Students' Union Launches Well Fair Week 2006

Week-long information campaign will promote health & fitness across all of the DIT.

Well Fair Week 2006, running from January 31st to February 3rd, will comprise of a series of events and information sessions that will focus on Healthy Eating; Exercise, Giving Up Smoking as well as Alcohol and Drug awareness.

Launching the campaign, Bernadette Farrell, DITSU Vice-President for Academic & Student Affairs said that Well Fair is one of the most important events in this year's busy calendar as Students' Union is keenly aware of the stresses and strains that students face.

She added: "With many students juggling a hefty college workload, part-time work and social life it is vital that we provide advice and guidance on the best way they can take care of body and mind."

"During Well Fair Week we will be running a varied programme of activities across all the DIT campuses promoting simple ideas that will help students to achieve a balance in their hectic lifestyles. We will have sports & fitness demonstrations; tips on easy, affordable and nutritious cooking; as well as health checks and of course lots of freebies," she added.

Watch out for displays of yoga, judo, tae-kwan-do at lunchtime and you can check your carbon monoxide levels as well. We're delighted that many of the Clubs & Socs; the Counselling Service as well as both Health Centres are working closely with us in this promotion this year.

Speaking about the timing of Well Fair Week she stated: "It's that time of year when students are just finding their feet after the exams and Christmas, energy levels are low and its understandable if everyone feels mentally and physically drained."

"Well Fair Week is designed to help us all get into a healthy routine, focus and prepare for the busy semester ahead," she added.

Well Fair Week is organised by the Student Affairs Department which is also responsible for advising students on all the 'non-academic' aspects of college life - everything from accommodation, finance, employment rights, health matters and much more.

Vice President, Bernadette Farrell works closely with Aimee O'Callaghan, the Student Affairs Co-ordinator, in dealing with students' queries and they are happy to help with any problems or questions and they're mighty for the tea and biscuits.



e-Learning Day Comes to DIT

Just before Christmas DITSU representatives took part in the DIT e-Learning Day, which was held on in the Focas Institute in Kevin Street.

UNION NEWS

BY MARY SCALLY

Bernadette Farrell, Vice-President of Academic & Student Affairs led the delegation which also included Bob Coggins, President; Kieran Keane, Convenor KST; Laura Phelan, Convenor CBST; Laura Troy, 2nd Year Science KST and Eoin O'Brien, 3rd Year Social Care MSQ.

Bernadette introduced this session by welcoming this opportunity to engage with process of developing elearning strategies in DIT. She said that today's students have grown up with technology and have an expectation that some of their teaching will be delivered in ways other than face to face lectures and tutorials. They, as the end-user, are the key stakeholders in the process and it is vital that they are actively consulted so that their feedback can constructively inform the development and implementation of elearning in DIT. In his remarks at the conclusion of the session Professor Brian Norton, DIT President, strongly echoed these sentiments in his comments.

The session continued with all the student reps talking about how elearning is (and isn't!) affecting their educational experience. Most students recorded positive experiences of elearning at DIT, with any difficulties encountered mainly ascribed to the equipment available or the fact that elearning is not yet standard across DIT. A question & answer session followed which very informative for everyone in attendance

Earlier in the day Minister of State at the Department of Education & Science, Síle de Valera, launched the Quest for Learning website (www.questforlearning.org). The site is a new resource for students, teachers and graduates and provides information on study skills, disability awareness and employability skills. It is AAA Bobby rated, the highest accessibility rating

available, ensuring it will be of benefit to the maximum number of students. The site was developed as a joint initiative by the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD), with the support of the Dublin Institute of Technology, UCC, FÁS, and the Higher Education Authority.

This was followed with an update on the recent progress of elearning at DIT, with contributions from the Learning Technology Team, IT Services and Library Services. Dr Jen Harvey then chaired the "Gizmos and Gadgets" presentation, which showcased some of the tricks and technologies now available to all DIT lecturers.

In keeping with the theme of "Expanding the Campus" the afternoon presentations delivered by Frank Clarke (School of Biological Sciences) and Paddy Keys (School of Culinary Arts & Food Technology) looked at the use of elearning with students who have reduced contact hours or are located overseas. Students who are required to spend an extended period abroad on international placement in order to further their experience and gain language skills are an obvious beneficiary of elearning. Using case study examples from a number of courses in his School, Paddy K spoke of how he has successfully used the communication tools in WebCT to motivate students while they spend this time away from the structured Institute environment. The tools also allow the students to remain in good contact with both their fellow-students and lecturers.

The day concluded with some rather tasty mulled wine and mince pies! A good day all around.

Above: Bernadette Farrell, Laura Phelan, Kieran Keane, Professor Brian Norton, Eoin O'Brien, Laura Troy and Bob Coggins.

Student Return Fares From DUBLIN

Limerick	= €15.00
Cork	= €12.00
Galway	= €16.50
Waterford	= €11.50
Athlone	= €13.00
Sligo	= €20.00
Donegal	= €22.00
Ballina	= €20.00
Clonmel	= €14.50
Belfast	= €12.00
Rosslare	= €19.00



Bus Éireann
 buy online at buseireann.ie
 email: info@buseireann.ie

Fares correct at time of print.





New University Campus Promised for DIT

DIT's city-sprawling presence in Dublin has always been an endearing nuisance, with six faculties and 20,000 students scattered over 30 sites around the capital. Anyone who has had to trek across town to borrow a book from a distant campus will be acutely aware of this.

COLLEGE NEWS

BY DAVID WHITE

That was the past.

DIT is now making major strides towards the redesign of a 72-acre site at Grangegorman in the north inner city. This will be the location of a new DIT campus that will hold all of its students, staff, facilities, faculties – and even an accommodation block – on the same site.

The Grangegorman site, located north of Smithfield and west of Phibsborough, is currently the largest undeveloped site in Dublin city. It used to house St Brendan's

Hospital, a psychiatric health care institution, which has since been scaled down in accordance with changes in the health system. A section of land on the site will be retained by the Health Authority to provide services for outpatient treatment.

Paul Horan of the Campus Planning Office for Grangegorman explains the main motive behind the proposed move to Grangegorman and says that the new facilities will benefit the students. "The main reason is to give a better educational experience," he says.

"What we really lack now in DIT is a lot of the infrastructure, social and sporting spaces. They're split all over the place like the gym in Bolton Street and the gym in Kevin Street – if they were combined together it would actually make a good facility."

It is also hoped that the Grangegorman site will serve students better with improved infrastructure. "Aungier Street is a very nice building but some of the others leave an awful lot to be desired," says Paul Horan.

"In Grangegorman, what we will be looking at is fit-for-purpose buildings that are not going to be Gerry Made for our use like many of the current buildings have been."

Students that the Compact talked to hope that the Grangegorman campus will have a "solid campus feel to it" and be "less all over the place".

Paul understands that the students want to be involved in the move to Grangegorman and they will be consulted in the planning process. "In the main project team the Students' Union are strongly represented on it and are vocal. Our brief of what we want is constantly being developed in consultation," he says.

The new facilities at the state-of-the-art campus will include a Library and Learning Centre, which will provide a hub for the Institute's book collection, making those cross-city hikes a thing of the past. Good news for all DIT students.

Aoife, a third year business student in Aungier St, believes that the move will make the learning experience better. "I have to go to Cathal Brugha Street and Mountjoy Square to get books," she says. "I know it's not far but it's still further than just going upstairs."

There will also be a resources centre, a craft-training centre, lecture theatres, a student support centre and a restaurant/cafe. College housing facilities will finally allow students to live, play and study in DIT. Finally, a provision for crèche facilities in Grangegorman demonstrates an awareness of the realities of college for future students.

Intriguingly, there will be facilities at Grangegorman for apprentices, who can train at DIT and a couple of other institutes of technology. Described as a "crucial aspect" of the new campus, it will cater for the increased demand for apprentices to fuel the growth in the building sector.

There have also been assurances made that students will not be disrupted in the move to Grangegorman and buildings will not be sold under their feet. "The students are protected," says Paul Horan.

"The DIT Act still exists and under that the DIT Governing Body are an independent entity and they have a final veto on the transfer of property and they are legally bound not to sell over property unless they are convinced that business can continue and they are getting good as or better value for it [the property]."

Paul Horan understands the close

links that students and staff have to their respective sites and they do not want the new site to become an "uniformed and anonymous concrete jungle," as he puts it.

"We really have tried in the development brief to retain the sense of space that we have with Kevin Street or Cathal Brugha Street – these are very clear communities and people have strong ties to them," he continues.

"So we don't want to create this uniformed place. We want it that when you are in the Engineering school it will look very different to the Business school and so on. We could even carry the names forward and we could have New Bolton Street and New Kevin Street."

As part of DIT's philosophy of preparing students for the real world, the Grangegorman site will continue the college's close links with industry. To this end, there will be a number of "business incubation units" available alongside the teaching facilities. These will allow students to work and study on the same site.

Grangegorman will be well connected to the larger city, with ambitious new Government transport plans showing a LUAS stop at Broadstone, which would service Grangegorman. Plans for a metro line have been raised as well.

Declan is doing an MA in Aungier Street. "At the moment DIT doesn't have a university feel to it," he told the Compact.

Once the move has been completed it is generally understood that an application will be sought to give DIT a university status; which will mean that it can compete with UCD, Trinity College and DCU on a level playing field. "The legislation is already well advanced to move us under the Higher Education Authority (HEA), who currently administer the university sector," says Horan.

"So from next year the HEA are planning to have us under their remit so that will give DIT ninety-eight per cent autonomy of a university in terms of finance and how we run our affairs."

"So we will get a lump sum of money and it will be up to DIT how they run the show instead of the micro management that goes

on now. So that is going to happen, the campus is going to happen and all that's left is a name – but that, in my opinion, will be just the icing on the cake."

So when will the move actually happen? "A bill had to be passed through the Oireachtas and that process took three years alone," says Paul.

"However, by mid-2007 we will know what the plan looks like and then we will be doing the detailed planning on individual buildings. So construction would begin by late 2007 or early 2008 when the JCBs will actually be getting in there."

The main objective for the Campus Planning Office is to get the bulk of the students over as soon as possible. "Our initial wish is that we go for a big bang because there's no sense in building a bit of a library and a bit of a Students' Union," says Horan.

"Our aim is to have a big group of the students together by 2011, but because we are financing a lot of it by selling properties, a lot will depend on the to-ing and fro-ing on that."

"Everyone will be over by 2013 to 2015 realistically, but to get half the students up there you are looking at building five Aungier Streets – it's a very big project," Horan continued. "It's really exciting and DIT, as it stands, is a very popular institution. If you un-cork these issues that we have, DIT will be very prosperous going forward."

One obstacle to the move was dismantled recently, when the Government set up the Grangegorman Development Agency to oversee the move. This will begin work very shortly, so if any future students are planning to come back to DIT in the years to come to complete a post-graduate course or even to work in DIT they will be doing so in a purpose built campus in the north inner city.

**Additional Reporting by:
Cormac Cahill.**



Student Rep Needed

DITSU Grangegorman Committee requires a student rep to join their committee.

This committee already consists of Staff from DITSU Ltd & DITSU Trading Ltd, 1 Convenor & 3 Sabbaticals.

This committee will discuss the requirements that the DIT Students' Union need going forward to DIT Grangegorman.

The President & General Manager already represent DITSU on the DIT Grangegorman Committee.

The Chair of DIT Grangegorman Committee, Mr Noel O'Connor, has been invited to the next Governing Council Meeting on 7th February 2005 in DIT Aungier St, Room 3068 at 6.30 p.m. which, he will be making a presentation informing Governing Council on the developments of the "Grangegorman Facility".

At this meeting we will elect a student member to join DITSU Grangegorman Committee.

If you are interested please fill out a nomination form. You can drop this into your local union or email the Clerk of Governing Council: administrator@ditsui.ie

You can access: www.ditie for further information on Grangegorman or contact Bob Coggins, DITSU President: president@ditsui.ie



dit students' union



Chess Society Blitz

The Christmas Blitz Competition was held in King's Inn Pub on Bolton St on the 14th of December. It was a great mix of informal chess and a Christmas social. A prize fund of 60 Euro in vouchers was shared by the winners J. Murray, B Cotter and B. Dwyer. Congratulations to all who competed.

There will be a trip to Cork for the Mulcahy Cup over the weekend Jan 20-22nd. The Gonzaga Challenge

Cup will also take place in late January in Gonzaga college in Ranelagh. A challenge match v Phibsboro chess club will take place in early February.

Chess continues for the new year each Monday at 730pm in Bolton st at the Coffee dock. (Please note change from regular room of 409). For more information on the above. email: ditches@hotmail.com

Scoreforecast

Are you broke after Christmas?

DIT Sports Unit has joined forces with AIB to offer all DIT students and staff the chance to win some easy cash in this exciting and FREE ScoreForecast Internet sport's prediction competition. The Spring 2006 competition will commence on Tuesday, the 7th of February, 2006 and will run for six weeks throughout February and March. You'll just have to spend five minutes each week predicting the outcome of a number of sporting fixtures to be in with a chance of winning the 100 euro weekly prize. The fixtures are selected from a wide range of DIT, national and International sports such as the Allianz GAA League, the Football Premiership and the Six Nation's Rugby. To make your life easy, short fixture previews are supplied for the DIT fixtures.

The prizes for the player(s) with the highest scores after six weeks are: 1st 500 euro; 2nd 250 euro; 3rd 125 euro and 4th 50 euro

If you want to have a punt, don't wait around. Remember, you don't have to be a sporting genius to have a chance of winning. You can register on the website now and have a look at the competition format. You'll be sent an e-mail automatically when the competition kicks off. You'll find the competition at www.scoreforecast.dit.ie.

Societies Listings for February

If you want your club or society featured on these pages for the next edition of The Compact please contact the editor, Cormac Cahill compact@ditsu.ie

BREAK DANCE

Holding workshops every Wednesday between 7 - 9pm, for all levels in Kevin Street. Also holding a break dancing extravaganza on the 11th February, in Club Martello at the Portmarnock Sports and Leisure Centre, doors opening at 8pm, tickets 7 euro each @ the door.

CHRISTIAN UNION

The Christian Union's weekly meeting is moving from Bolton St to Aungier St, Thursdays at 7pm in the student union student's activity room.

CAPOEIRA

Classes start back on the 3rd February, 3pm in the gym in Kevin Street

DJ SOC

Holding a inter college dj battle, with eight colleges competing, starting 23 February running to the 6th March, all Dublin heats in the Pod. Info attached.

JUGGLERS

The jugglers are holding a juggling convention in March, this is an event not to be missed, running from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th of March. It is guaranteed to be an extravaganza of fun colour and excitement. Venus to be confirmed, so keep your eye out for posters, or on the socie website. Also holding weekly workshops every Monday, 5 - 8pm in Belvedere College, Temple Street

OGRA SINN FEIN

Ogra National Congress is being held the weekend of the 3rd of February, in ATGWU Hall, on Abbey Street. Main guest speaker Gerry Adams, social evening on Saturday, with a full day of activities on Sunday.

LGBT

Are going on a trip to Barcelona, departing on the 10th February, returning on the 14th. Rainbow Week is also coming up dates to be confirmed. Also weekly meetings are being held, on a different day every week, in different locations, so look up ditlgbt.com, for more information.

ASA

Up and coming events include a charity night in the sugar club with live bands and djs. The society is also preparing the society publication alltrect magazine

CAFA

Cathal Brugha's culinary arts and fine foods society. February will see the society embark on more amazing meal experiences and the society is planning to go on a mystery trip away.

CHESS SOCIETY

The Bolton street based chess soc are meeting every Monday night in the coffee dock area in Bolton Street from 7-9. All are welcome. The society is preparing for the chess intersvarsity in March.

CULCHIE SOC

February will see our resident Bolton street boggers (the only soc with three toy tractors) host the Culchie ceilie. Watch out around campus for more information

ENVIRONMENTAL SOC

Throughout February will be hosting a series of seminars with guest various guest speakers. Get wellies out as the society is planning a trip to a bog this term.

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

The society has over 70 members heading to Liverpool in March is planning to have a couple of society nights out in February

POKER SOC

Feeling lucky? If so the poker soc are meeting every Tuesday in the canteen in Bolton at 5.30. All are welcome

REJECT MUSICAL SOCIETY

Since they've done belly dancing the society is switching to pole dancing for a change. Watch out Mountjoy Square's quirky society has a fest of treats like this in store for February.

MOUNTJOY SQUARE DRAMA

Are continuing a series of workshops with outside facilitators every Wednesday in the drama room on the third floor at 6.30pm. In the previous term the society enjoyed success at the one act wonder fest winning two awards for their play last orders. Their main production this year is the playboy of the western world. If you would like to be a part of the stage crew or set design crew please drop in.

BOLTON ST & CATHAL BRUGHA DRAMA

Production has begun on two plays for the DIT drama festival the Blue room and a new play called the next big thing.

OVERALL DRAMA

Are holding there overall drama week from the 27th February to the 11th March. It is promised to be two weeks of drama that will have you on the edge of your seat. For more information log onto, socs.dit.ie

DRAMA KEVIN STREET

Workshops being held every Tuesday in the basement of Kevin Street, B30 @ 6pm.

DANCE AUNGIER STREET

Dance workshops are recommencing, and dates and times are to be confirmed within the next few days, so log onto socs.dit.ie for more information.



Below: The lads in Galway at the presentation of the John Hanrahan Memorial Cup to Andrew Fallon, the DIT Champion (pictured in blue)

Aungier St. Poker

The Poker Society has some of the best student poker players in their tournaments every week in the Aungier St canteen.

CLUBS & SOCS
BY JEFF TAYLOR

Students pay 5 euro to pit their wits against one another from 4pm every Thursday with the chance of taking home the big prize at the end of play. Attracting over 50 students every week, the society keep their members happy by giving away poker hats and t-shirts donated by the online poker elite, such as PokerStars and PaddyPowerPoker.

The big money winners so far this year have been John Pryor (Aungier St), David Thompson (Bolton St), Derek Foley (Aungier St), Des Penny (Maynooth) and Brian Greene (Aungier St).

Congratulations to Brian Greene who is the only player to have won two tournaments and is in contention for player of the year. Also in contention are frequent final table finishers David Fielding, Luke Teeling, Thomas Smith and

Barry Graham.

On December 8th over 100 students sat down at the main event of the DIT POKER MARATHON, the biggest on-campus event of the year so far. 100 players played down to the last nine sharing a combined prize pool of 1,700 euro. Six different colleges were represented at the final table with the champion, Des Penny, travelling from Maynooth. Congratulations to Stephen O'Neill and Jamie Kennedy who were the best finishers from DIT.

DIT Aungier St. Poker Society will be running their second all-day poker marathon on Thursday, February 23rd. The winner of the main event will win a seat at a tournament on the Poker Channel with a prize pool of 20,000 euro. The Poker Society can often be found downstairs in the SU playing small games of No Limit Texas Hold'em if anyone ever wants a distraction for their studies.

Boy Racing at DIT

CLUBS & SOCS
BY NIAL D'ALY

It's been fairly busy for the Karting Club. We, the committee members (Mossey, Bear, and Jolly), would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their support and enthusiasm throughout the last semester.

The week following the sign up of our new petrol head members, we gave them the opportunity to arrive & drive in Kart City out in Santry for FREE!!! We supplied the transport from the colleges both northside & southside to and from the event for the members. For the second week of our calendar we brought out a group of students from north & south side colleges for a grand prix race. Again we supplied the transport for this event. It was good to see a promising 1st year student winning this event, showing that a large amount of talent has joined the club.

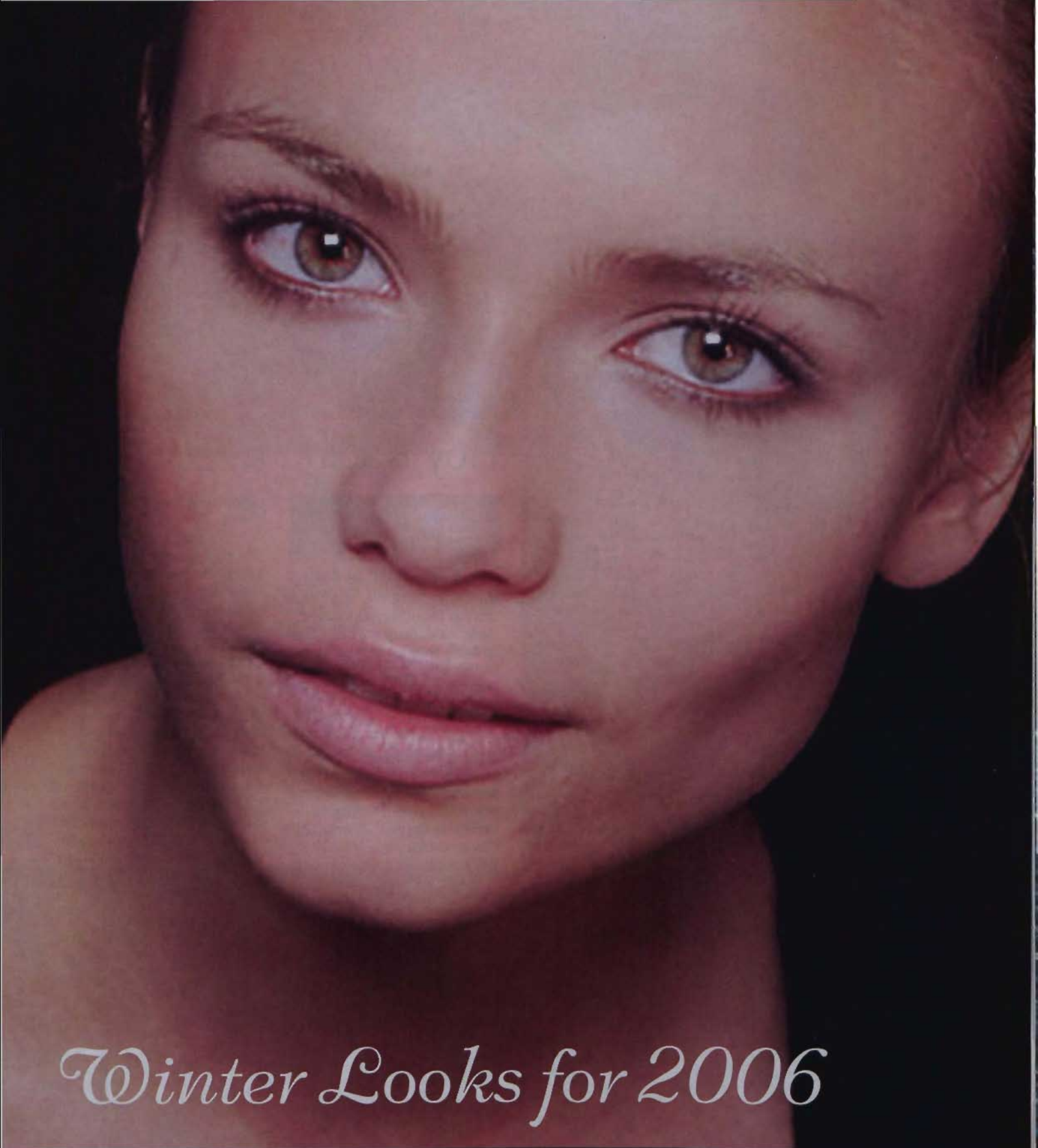
By the third event, spirits were high, the craic was "Mighty" and a few ego's started to think Formula 1 was the way for them. A bit of change is always good and our fourth event was a grand prix held in Kylemore Karting. Students from both north & south campuses arrived anxious for the chance to kart indoors. The reaction was unbelievable and still the committee members are receiving

compliments on a brilliant event.

We next headed for the Pallas Karting in Tynagh, Co. Galway, on the 10th of December. The track is Europe's largest outdoor karting track and is used in the Irish championship. The day was a success with 40 members being brought down to compete in the John Hanrahan Memorial Cup Race. In typical karting club style, the December weather tried its best to disrupt the race. All of the drivers braved the elements and the race ended with Andrew Fallon winning (and somehow getting a 2nd place trophy, for the 2nd time this season), Darren Keogan in 2nd place, followed by Mick Dundee in 3rd place.

Coming up we have karting team also takes part in The Inter-College Perpetual Cup race is the last intervarsity competition of the year and held the same weekend as the last round of the championship. This cup has been hotly contested over the past number of years and excitement and close racing is guaranteed.

Well that's about all for now but if you need to get in contact with any of the committee members you can do so via info@ditkartingclub.com and be sure to check out the clubs website www.ditkartingclub.com for all the latest news.



Winter Looks for 2006

FASHION

BY LILI FORBERG

RED IS BACK

This winter, glamour makes its comeback, ditching summer's soft girlie look, with a mysterious old-fashioned sensual look, in the name of Scarlet lip. You can't achieve the season's feminine chic without a slick of red lipstick, as seen on the catwalks at

Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior. Thanks to new textures and pigments, this look is easily created. Try Chanel lipstick in fire, 14; Yves Saint Laurent Rouge Pure Shine or Lancôme Le Rouge Absolu 275.

LUSHEST LASHES

It's all about the lashes this winter. Designers are on a sixties kick and so the lashes to match are essential. To get that Twiggy and Katie Sedg-

wick look all you need is lashings of lashes. Volume and curl-boosting mascaras or indeed some fabulous falsies, you just gotta have the lushest lashes. Try Lancôme L'Extrême; Yves Saint Laurent Volume Infini Curl Mascara or Make Up Forever false Eyelashes in 25009.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

For the season's icy nights, create a Russian doll look with colours



which will warm up your bones. We are talking pale powdered skin, rosy cheeks, frosted lips and intense eyes. By intense we mean any colour you choose, be it plum or blue, as long as it stands out.

Try Guerlain's Fairy White All-Over Powder for cheeks and collar bones; M.A.C. Eyeshadow Palette with 'Plumage', 'Fade', 'Tilt' and 'Deep Truth' or Givenchy Prism Again! Eyes in Purple Emotion.

GET THE GLOW

To make your skin look radiant all through winter, make sure to use illuminating lotions like at the Ralph Lauren autumn/winter 05-06 show. This season, it is all about maintaining your summer glow. Highlight your cheek and brow bones to make your complexion look healthy, youthful and shimmering.

Try Stila All Over Shimmer Liquid Luminizer #3; Olay Complete Care Multi-Radiance Daily Illumination UV Fluid or L'Oréal On The Loose Shimmering Powder.

Photography & makeup (eye & lips) by Lili Forberg
www.misslili.net

Gig Listings

THUR. 2ND FEB

Vesta Varro
Whelans, Dublin
Doors 8pm
8 euro

SAT. 4TH FEB

Vesta Varro
The Stables Mullingar
Doors 8pm
7 euro

FRI 10TH FEB

Tadhg Cooke
The Stables, Mullingar

Vesta Varro

Tower Records Instore
Instore 1pm
FREE
Triple Headline, Jessie & Layla, & Jenny Lindfors

Vesta Varro

Crawdaddy, Dublin
Doors. 8pm
7.50 euro
Support Bands: Travega and Kimono from Iceland

SAT. 11TH FEB

Vesta Varro
Dolan's, Limerick
Doors 8pm
10 euro
Support Kimono/Rallentando

The Walls

Glor, Ennis, Clare
18 euro/15 euro
Glor Box-Office.
Tel: 065 684 3103

Tadhg Cooke

Dolan's Upstairs, Limerick
Triple Headline, Jessie & Layla, & Jenny Lindfors

SUN. 12TH FEB

Tadhg Cooke
Cypress Ave., Cork
Triple Headline, Jessie & Layla, & Jenny Lindfors

FRI. 17TH FEB

Tadhg Cooke
The Spirit Store, Dundalk
Doors 8pm
8 euro
Supporting Q

SAT. 18TH FEB

Vesta Varro
Cleeres, Kilkenny
Doors. 8pm
7 euro
in association with KilkennyMusic.com

MON. 20TH FEB

Tadhg Cooke
Roisin Dubh, Galway
Triple Headline, Jessie & Layla, & Jenny Lindfors

WED. 22ND FEB

Tadhg Cooke
The Sugar Club, Dublin
Triple Headline, Jessie & Layla, & Jenny Lindfors

With Thanks to: Entertainment Architects
Contact: Bernie Divilly
email: publicity@ealtd.ie
Phone: (01) 219 46 61

OTHER VOICES RETURNS

Other Voices returns on Wednesday 15th February on



Broken Social Scene Set to Improve Musical Arena

Broken Social Scene
'Broken Social Scene'
(Arts & Crafts, 2005)
4/5 Stars

Broken Social Scene is the third full-length album from the Canadian collective of the same name. It was recorded over the past two years with producer Dave Newfeld, who also worked on the band's acclaimed previous record, *You Forgot It In People*. The 17-strong collective, featuring artists from Metric, Feist, Do Make Say Think and Stars, are joined by a further six members on this ambitious offering.

Opening track *Our Faces Split the Coast in Half* yawns and stretches, tentatively tugging the album into action. The track sets the tone of what is to follow, playing out like a swirling jamming session, everything tied at the top with horn arrangements and melodic, garbled vocals. *Ibi Dreams of Pavement* (a better day) provides the collective's first opportunity to flex some real muscle, showcasing a glorious mish-mash of stirring noise that builds towards a triumphant crescendo.

7/4 (shoreline) is a straightforward, double-dose of upbeat indie-pop. Handclaps maintain the momentum in *Windsurfing Nation*, as insidious guitar hooks topple out breathlessly. It's all *Gonna Break* spectacularly closes the album in characteristic Broken Social Scene style; an almost ten minute sprawling kaleidoscope of sound. While the experimentation works well here, it is occasionally lapses into indulgence, for example in *Bandwitch*.

Minor complaints aside, it's amazing that a group of musicians of this quality managed to create an album with such great designs, and still retain a sense of haphazard beauty. Great stuff.

By: Emma Cawley



Vesta Varro Charming Men Set for Top of the Pops

Vesta Varro
'Blue Mirror Boy' / 'Supa Hero'
IN Records
4/5 Stars

Vesta Varro have already been described as 'one of Ireland's most exciting emerging sounds for 2006' by the cult London radio station, Xfm. In fact, even before the release of their debut double A side single, the Limerick band seem to be in no shortage of fans.

Vesta Varro have already earned a place on the billing of concerts such as the Bud Rising Festival, O2 in the Park and the Hard Working Class Heroes Festival 2005. This of course isn't surprising considering that the band is produced by Nick Seymour, bassist with Crowded House, and managed by former head of Island Records, Nick Rowe.

The double A side single of *Blue Mirror Boy* and *Supa Hero* is a taster of the debut album set to be released later this year on IN Record. Both singles are good, but *Supa Hero* is better with hand clapping beats and prominent drums, the vocals sound like Arctic Monkeys in the way Damien Drea on vocals seems to spit out the lyrics. The sound of Vesta Varro is fairly unexperimental; drums, guitars, English accented vocals but the difference between Vesta Varro and other upcoming bands, is the songs- they're original and well written instead of appearing to be an afterthought.

Catch Vesta Varro at a venue near you! They're playing support for Dwight on February 2nd in Whelans and they support Travega and Kimono in Crawdaddy on February 10th when they also play an instore in Tower Records on Wicklow Street.

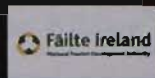
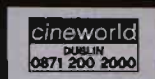
Did I mention that Paul Cook, drummer of the legendary Sex Pistols, lists himself among their fans? Something I don't think Bell X1 can claim!

By: Valerie Farrell

The 4th Jameson Dublin International Film Festival

Celebrating Cinema
17-26 February 2006

www.dubliniff.com



JAMESON
IRISH WHISKEY



Events Calendar

Central Remedial Clinic (CRC)

This year, the students of DIT have chosen the Central Remedial Clinic as its R.A.G. charity.

Their aim is to help people with disabilities take responsibility for and have control over their own lives, and to set and achieve their own goals.

Throughout R.A.G. week, there will be many opportunities to get involved and make some money for this excellent charity.

To sign up as a volunteer, just text 'VOLUNTEER' to 086 826 1912

ENTERTAINMENT & FUNDRAISING Mon 13th and Wed 15th February

Your Local Part-time officers will have local entertainment on your site on the Monday and Wednesday of R.A.G. week.

BED PUSH Mon 13th February

The charity bed push involves students pushing the S.H.A.G. bed across the city while collecting money for charity.

CHARITY SILENCE Mon 13th February

A group of students will be looking for your support for their sponsored silence, all in aid of the R.A.G. charity. It's at lunchtime in Aungier Street, and there will be other fun activities going on there too.

R.A.G. TRIP Thurs 16th February

The R.A.G. trip has always been the biggest part of R.A.G. week, and this year it's bigger than ever.

Tickets are on sale from February 7th in the SU shops, and they cost 30 euro. They usually sell out quickly, so set your alarm clock!

There will be a departure point on the North Side, and one on the South Side.

LUVABALOOZA

Tues 14th February

This year, Luvabalooza is happening again in Aungier Street, and is set to be a major event. There will be collections for the C.R.C. on the day, and many fundraising activities.

There will be two stages with live acts, a bungee jump (sponsorship cards available from your Students' Union Student Support Advisor). There will also be games, activities, raffles, a wheel of fortune, and a real life cupid.

And we're not forgetting the DIT staff this year: We'll have a quiz, a DIT v CRC debate, and for the sports enthusiast, the Staff and Students will battle it out in 5-a-side soccer, table tennis and pool competition.

There will be movies showing all day long if you need a break from all the madness.

There will also be entertainment by RED-SOC in Carnival Bar all day long, and that night, the Love In Ball - The SPIRIT of LOVE in Spirit Nightclub, Abbey Street.

Keep your eye out on how you could meet your Mr or Mrs right so check your local notice boards for more detailed information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you'd like to get involved, or if you want to run your own R.A.G. enterprise, please get in touch with your local part-time officers, or convenor. You can email your local Student Support Advisor at

AUNGIER STREET
advisor@ast.ditsu.ie

BOLTON STREET
administrator@ditsu.ie

KEVIN STREET
advisor@kstditsu.ie

RATHMINES ROAD
advisor@ast.ditsu.ie

CATHAL BRUGHA STREET
advisor@cbsditsu.ie

MOUNT JOY SQUARE
advisor@msqditsu.ie



DIT SOCIETIES CALENDAR

This year DIT Societies have decided to produce a belated 2006 calendar in aid of the Central Remedial Clinic, our nominated Rag charity.

Twelve societies all in various stages of undress were brought together by the Societies and Entertainments Departments in Bolton St, to produce a calendar which will raise a few eyebrows and possibly more!

The calendar will be going on sale in the Student Union shops for 5 euro on Thursday the 9th of February.

So by buying the Calendar, you will be supporting the CRC, and having a laugh at the willing societies. Try and see who you recognise!!!



Help Out the CRC During Rag Week

What do you think of when you hear 'Rag Week'? Mystery Puke Tours? Not having to feel guilty about missing lectures? Accidentally scoring the class smart-arse? Or making a difference in the lives of 4,000 children with physical disabilities?

RAG SPECIAL

BY VALERIE FARRELL

Rag week this year runs from the 13th to the 16th of February. Most of the proceeds raised during the week will go to the very worthy cause of the Central Remedial Clinic in Dublin.

The Clinic was founded in April 1951 by Lady Valerie Goulding and Kathleen O'Rourke as a small non-residential treatment centre on Upper Pembroke Street for the treatment of those left with disabilities as a result of outbreaks of Polio in the 1940s and 1950s.

The Central Remedial Clinic today is a non-residential national centre for the care, treatment and development of children and adults with physical disabilities ranging from cerebral palsy and spina bifida to muscular

dystrophy and arthrogryposis. The Centre is the largest organisation of its kind in Ireland and provides services to almost 4,000 children and 500 adults throughout the country.

Although the clinic is largely funded by the state, there is a significant shortfall which must be made up by voluntary donations and fundraising. This is where the fundraising from DIT Rag Week comes in; all the money donated by the kind students of DIT will go towards providing physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, social work, psychology, nursing, orthopaedics, paediatrics, parent support and vision and hearing specialists for the 4,000 children being treated in the Central Remedial Clinic.

Money is also needed for the Clinic's four Dublin-based Day Activity Centres located in Clontarf, Coolock, Firhouse and Hartstown. These centres provide social, physical, educational and recreational activities for adults whose disabilities prevent them from participating in other training or work programmes. The Central Remedial Clinic also runs Scoil Muchua, a school for children and young people with physical disabilities who live in West Dublin, Kildare and West Wicklow.

So dig deep into your pockets instead of buying that vodka and redbull and settle for a 3 euro pint of Fosters and give the difference to a very worthy cause - you'll feel good about yourself, you'll help thousands of kids and your hangover won't be half as bad!

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

There are loads of ways that you can get involved in RAG. This year we have set a target of €20,000, which we hope we will be able to raise. But we need your help. Much of the Unions time is taking up organising the overall events. We need volunteers to help out as stewards at both of these.

More importantly, we want you, your mates, your class; your year, to get together and think of some ways that you can help us reach our target. Already some Aungier St students are organising a sponsored silence, Societies are producing a calendar and other students are organising table quizzes. The point is, it doesn't matter what you do, or what you raise, we just want to make this the biggest, best and most successful RAG week in DIT. If everyone gets motivated we might make more than we hoped, which would be fantastic.



Travel to St. Johann

Many people will not even entertain the idea of a skiing holiday because it's too expensive, too cold or too active in comparison with a cheap, hot, lazy sun holiday. I was one of those people until I gave into a persistent friend and set off for the Tirolean area of Austria during the Christmas break.

TRAVEL

BY SHARON VOGIATZI

A ski trip need not cost you more than a sun holiday. Scrap the package deals and book everything independently. Very little is spent during the day as you'll be busy skiing from morning until noon and food and drink is inexpensive.

Don't worry if you're not the fittest. In our group, there was a sixty-year old woman and a man who suffered so badly from arthritis he couldn't get out of his seat unaided.

This typically Tirolean village is so perfectly white that it seems unreal. Majestic mountains encircle the com-

munity in a bear hug while mounds of snow weigh down the trees and roof tops.

There are only two nightclubs in the village, the supermarkets close at the mere utterance of the words 'twilight' or 'bank holiday' and the shopping would be more suited to an exceptionally unstylish 86 year old. But the après-ski is great fun, the restaurants are cheap, the entertainment is wonderful (sexy ski instructors jumping through fire on stilts while the sky is lit up with a spectacular fireworks display!), and the skiing is fantastic!

When you're not skiing, snow-boarding, hiking or sledding, you're sipping warm alcoholic drinks like Gluhwein and hot chocolate with rum; feasting on Goulash soup and sausages; dancing to ridiculous music in the après ski bar and inhaling crisp mountain air that freeze your nasal hairs and all traces of a hangerover. Some helpful pointers:

- Bring sunscreen and lip protection
- Join an Irish group at ski school. The more I travel, the more I realise that you can't beat the Irish for the craic and banter.
- Listen when the snow-plough (the technique of stopping) is being taught. Throwing yourself on the ground does not work as your skis will hurtle downwards of their own accord.

- Go drinking straight after ski school. Max's Bar is right next to the slopes and every so often a shot of alcohol pours from the ceiling.

- Don't wear stilettos as you might kill yourself on the way to the pub. The dress-code is so casual you wouldn't look amiss in your oompah-loompah ski pants and five polo-necks.

Price-list for a week:

- Aer Lingus return flights to Munich after Christmas: 156 euro. Later in the season: 80 euro.
- Four Seasons airport return bus (brings you to and collects you from your accommodation): 72 euro.
- Ski pass: 173 euro (less if you're a beginner.)
- Ski lessons (10am-3pm): 126 euro.
- Ski, pole and boot hire: 96 euro.
- Bed and breakfast: 180 euro.
- Dinner: 6 euro+
- Lunch: 4 euro+
- Beer: 4 euro.

This works out a lot less expensive than the package ski holiday and is even cheaper than the DIT ski club trip which cost 769 euro (ski lessons and food not included.)

So, forget the bikini-diet and the rope-burn at Kiltarnan because once you decide to try a ski holiday, it's likely you'll become addicted.

Graduates to Go Further

"Graduates with disabilities are highly educated and qualified, but it's not enough just to be educated. They, like every other graduate, need to get on the ladder of employment

COLLEGE NEWS

BY RACHEL GALLERY

Considering the high cost of living in Ireland, graduates with disabilities need a good job to enjoy the fruits of their hard study," says Tina Lowe of AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability).

Every year thousands of people with disabilities graduate from Irish third level institutions. Currently 50 to 70% of these highly qualified people are unemployed. Ireland's first graduate fair specifically for graduates and students with disabilities aims to lower that figure. The fair will take place 28th Feb between 11am -4 pm at Dublin's Mansion House.

The event is part of an EU-funded project called WAM (Willing Able and Mentoring). "The aim of WAM is to find employment for graduates with disabilities that match their ability. Systems will be put in place in large mainstream companies to fully integrate the disabled employee in the work environment, including the social aspects of the job," says Lowe.

The fair is a joint venture between AHEAD and a number of big organisations that are offering 6 month job placements to graduates with disabilities. Employers involved include IBM, Eircom, Bank of Ireland, Hamilton Osborne King, NLN (National Learning Network), Irish Life & Permanent, DCU, FÁS and the Department of Finance. All of these organisations will have stands in the Mansion House to recruit graduates and discuss employment opportunities.

The Aisling Foundation will also feature alongside Access Ability- to provide guidance and support to any graduate who might require it and GET AHEAD - the national forum of graduates with disabilities. There will be free workshops conducted by experts in their field on topics such as CV preparation, confidence building and interview techniques. Mock interviews will be held, to give graduates and final year students the opportunity to develop interview skills and receive constructive feedback. Keynote speakers and a celebrity guest will also attend.

Organiser Tina Lowe stresses that the WAM graduate fair is not a token gesture but a genuine attempt to match qualified, intelligent, hard working people with respected employers. As a blind UCD graduate with an MA in Equality Studies she is well aware

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Tennis Intervarsity Coming Soon

DIT is keen to compete in the Irish Tennis Intervarsity Tournament due to take place in Trinity College around late February/ early March. DIT tennis is looking forward to entering at least one mens and one ladies team comprising of three doubles each.

SPORTS NEWS

BY NIAMH INGOLDSBY

At present training takes place every Wednesday in the Leinster Cricket Grounds in Rathmines from 5-7pm. There are six quality astro courts available with lighting. Colin Wyman coaches everyone individually irrespective of standard. Participants are suitably matched for friendlies.

Tennis is a sport for everyone. It's good for a natter at the net and then the odd whack of a ball

or a series of aggressive though skilfully played points. I remember being in Rathmines one evening when a Parisian undergrad Bouioun arrived. He explained he was studying an engineering project in Bolton St. from September till Christmas. He decided to come along because he was familiar with the rules of the game and had a good standard. Irrespective of the language barrier he beat me rotten. Days later we bumped into each other in the library and another face around the college had been made familiar for the pair of us.

Further information on the Intervarsities can be accessed from the DIT and Trinity websites.

Fast facts: 1. On court the all-whites rule doesn't always apply. Serena Williams has been seen sporting catsuits, denim skirts, knee high boots and \$40,000 of dangly earrings.

2. Layton Hewitt is married to Bec Cartwright (Hayley from Home&Away) and they are expecting their first child in October.

3. In February 2001 Venus and Serena Williams starred in The Simpsons episode entitled 'Tennis the Menace'.

Stan the Man & the Old Man for Eire

Possibly the most massively huge announcement by the FAI in some months was made within the last fortnight. Stephen 'Stan' Staunton was unveiled as the new manager of the boys in green.

SPORTS NEWS

BY CONOR MAGHER

"Shit, fucking Delany, ya c@*t..." was to be heard coming out of my mouth when I heard the news and upon ringing my Da for a good moan I had to agree that it seems the chap's trying his hardest to cripple our chances of holding our heads high regarding soccer. Seriously though, what the f@*k?! Paul Merson manages Wallsall, some other guy coached them and then there was our Steve, not an actual coach mind but 'very good with the younger lads' as one of the Wallsall staff described him while holding back the tears of laughter during an interview. Delany reckons 'when we set about our recruitment last October

we were very clear in what we wanted. The primary attributes of leadership, motivational abilities and tactical knowledge of the game were among our top priorities. Stephen has always impressed us with his performances, his attitude, his commitment and his passion for the game and importantly he has unrivalled knowledge of the dressing room." That's grand but what does unrivalled knowledge of the dressing room mean, I've been reading all the media coverage and this quote keeps popping up.

The new dream team has been marketed by the FAI as better than cheese on toast and like the fluctuating fools they always prove to be, the soccer hacks have lapped it up saying lets give them a chance and see. Robson lost his job to Greame Souness and his slightly better functioning mind; Alan Kelly was out of a job and clearly desperate; and the other guy was at hopeless Villa; and as for Stan - if that is his real name - he was a great servant but Stuart Pearce he is not.

'My Mammy warned me not to take it,' said Stan.

Remember those words Steve.



Shopping Culture Saturation

It wasn't long ago that women wore tailored clothes from the dress-makers; items were made at home for children; shop hours were strictly business hours; beautiful things were to be found in boutiques; doormen opened the door; and afternoon tea with a friend was the highlight of an afternoon's shopping.

SOCIAL ISSUES

BY NIAMH INGOLDSBY

That was the shopping culture of years gone by. But not now.

The new suburban shopping malls have gradually replaced and changed our old shopping culture into a buy now and pay later one-way ticket to instant gratification. But are these new all-in-one shopping malls over-rated or a great way to spend the afternoon?

Blanchardstown boasts over three hundred thousand visitors a week while Dundrum attracted around one million visitors in the fortnight after it opened in March 2005. The Square

in Tallaght will undergo a 300 million euro revamp this year in an attempt by an established player to protect its patch. Meanwhile renovations to the Ilac centre are familiar to all Bolton St., students who have to walk by there most days.

The theory that an ever-increasing consumption of goods is economically beneficial defines consumerism. An effort to convenience profiteering has encouraged shopping centres like Dundrum and Blanchardstown to act as the consummate prototype.

They sell every commodity from House of Fraser face cloths to McDonald's medium fries, they are designed to please all of the people all of the time.

However, for most people, consumerism carries connotations of being used. No shopping centre awards a Consumer of the Year trophy and it appears that shopping centres aspire to lead society to spend by offering unrivalled choice and convenience.

Mr. Pat Delany, Head of the Small Firms Association, believes "there is a feel good factor in the economy at the moment and really things couldn't be better." In mid-December of last year, he was quoted by the Irish Times as saying that, "consumer spending over the Christmas period will hit a record 4 billion euro and with as much as 22 million euro per hour being spent on Christmas Eve."

Despite the billions in investment, shopping centres cannot emulate the true traditional shopping experience that we love. There is an atmosphere to be found on every established shopping street that cannot be manufactured.

Just last week I found a laughing crowd encircling a street artist on Grafton Street. I noticed the architecture above Pennys on Mary Street; the ornate Butlers Café entrance and the beautifully ornate and clinical stained windows inside Bewley's Café, while enjoying tea with a friend after hitting the shops. Compare this with an unremarkable shop fronts in Dundrum Shopping Centre and surely you will notice a difference?

Personal space is important to us all, but this space is denied to us as every shopping centre contains a distinct lack of choice.

Women's clothes are mass produced in measurements that are not even consistent with other stores - a size 10 in NEXT could be a size 14 in Topshop. Baby clothes for girls are one colour and another for boys while the toilets are nearly always at an inconvenient extremity.

The luxury shopping experience has itself become a commodity. Even at a bus stop an advertisement for the Dundrum Shopping Centre tells me that style is something a person is born with, it cannot be bought. It all alludes to the idea that the shopping centre is a playground to those who have it in the genes.

But personal style is cultivated with thought.

A study by Bank of Ireland Banking forecasted that this year would be the best year for retailers since 2000. Whilst retailers are buoyant it appears that students here in DIT are not too fond of these new branded shopping malls. Some have to work there, or shop, or spent little hours socialising there, but as an engineering student put it: "Main streets are cool, shopping centres are ****."

The more sophisticated shopper buys from home even as a 400 million shopping centre is planned for Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Each supermarket has a website where one can create their own shopping list and arrange to have it delivered to his doorstep. Topshop, a high street store, will now provide a buyer with a selection of clothes to try on and purchase in their own home. It seems shopping centres are an unimaginative requirement of the present day, built to convenience consumer spending.



FRESHERS COLUMN
BY SHARON VOGIATZI

Exam Fever Strikes Again!

"I gaze at the exam paper with a dread akin to that experienced by Turkish chickens who forgot to take their Echinacea. I start to write, regurgitating all I've learned: course code, year and exam number."

As my writing becomes increasingly illegible (to mask my lack of knowledge), I discover an optimism that I didn't realise I possessed. I decide that I will beat the January blues that follow me into February, March, April and most of May. I will survive the daily trek to DIT dodging over-eager Metro distributors who chase me across the Liffey like blue-bibbed Terminators.

I will smile as I pay for a politics book that had better hold the secret to perfect happiness and sexual fulfilment for the price it's demanding. I will plan the next holiday destination that my friends and I will assault with the enthusiasm of freshly discharged residents of the Joy.

I focus on the innumerable games of pool and midweek boozing stretching out before me and I can cope



THE MATURE ANGLE
BY MAJELLA LAVIN

Celebrity Whales, I thank you for the mammaries!

"The advent of celebrity culture has taken on a life of its own since the new-year: Soapstar Superstars, Celebrity Big Brother and the spectacularly awful Dancing on Ice."

It seems there are no depths a Z list wannabe will go to in order to be recognised for the not so important job they do. The chance to flash a cosmetic breast or break dance on ice with a self righteous grin you couldn't air brush off seems to be their new found forum for inartistic expression.

Celebrity big brother has to be the best example out of all those offered. Channel four has nailed the right mix of eccentricity, self-promotion, down right nastiness and the essence of Essex. They coupled this with a little State side bling to give the viewers and the media ample fodder on which to cut their ever inquisitive teeth.

'Wanabee' celebs include George Galloway and Michael Barrymore who dine at the same table as Jodie



THE 3RD COLUMN
BY ANDREW DEEGAN

Do You Know Bertie?

"To tell you the truth, I'd never heard of Bertie Ahern, but I didn't want to be impolite." (I read from Noam Chomsky while he was dismissing claims that he told an interviewer 'Bertie was 'shining the shoes' of the Americans.)

Receiving an opportunity to write a column on politics, I decided the best start would be to ask the general student population their views on the issue. What I came back with was a huge variety of opposing opinions and views as to what politics actually is.

To be truthful, one student had it correct when he informed me that everything we do is political, which is true. When we use the college, the states facilities, is that not politics? The most common response was something along the lines of "Isn't tha' the government, Bertie and all tha? Sure what do they do for us but spend our tax money." Also true, they do spend our tax money and furthermore they take most of the blame for things that are wrong with our state. Then I asked some more informed

with my reluctant return to learning. Just about. My New Year's Resolutions will get me through these depressing wintry months.

I resolve to:

- Become fit and perfectly toned. I will achieve this by:
 - (i) Jogging and trying not to gob all over my neighbour's lawn three doors up.
 - (ii) Avoiding carbs, fats, sugars, caffeine, alcohol, going out, staying in and breathing comfortably.
- Think before I speak. I must remember Ronan Keating's words: "You say it best when you say nothing at all." (Especially when I'm about as smooth as Senator Mary O' Rourke.)

(what about that hooter) Marsh. A thespian called Rula who incidentally sounds as though the 80 gold flake she inhales per day make her more Patty and Selma than Desdemona or Cordelia. And the crème de la crème of "can you tell what it is yet", the cosmetic mutation of a man dressed as woman trapped behind bulbous lips. Lips that could cool Goldilocks and the three bears porridge in one swift exhalation and who has more unresolved issues than a Samaritans hotline - Pete Burns.

Barrymore appears to be struggling with some sort of meltdown and Galloway, far from discussing the tenuous economical and political issues he waxed lyrical about before entering the house seems happy to act out the Judas, nice to your face not so nice behind it gig. He has

students such as those that are more involved with particular parties and are familiar with history and profiles the parties stand for.

When asked on his view of peoples perceptions to words such as conservative party followers and right wing followers he gave me this informed answer:

"These things (politics) come in connotations, and sweeping generalisations. You can never have one brand of things. Just because someone follows a particular party, doesn't mean they fit into a certain profile". Now there's a politician in the making!

I asked a few people where they got their political influences. A lot of people got involved through friends and general curiosity. Upon read-

- Go to class and take good lecture notes as opposed to donning a glazed expression and doodling 'Yo!' in the margins. Find out what the library looks like or even what floor it's on.

Time spent commuting can be spent reading instead of daydreaming about showing Des Bishop that not all Irish women only heat up in front of a Super Ser (some of us have electric blankets.)

- Be punctual for important events. This includes not throwing Saturday night's drinking money at a trembling taxi driver and forcing him onto the dual-carriageway's hard shoulder half an hour before an exam is due to start.

This resolution is the inspiration for the last pointer of my exam that

pranced about licking his.... whiskers in an improvisation as a pussy, (cat that is!) What could he possibly hope to achieve from that, a slot on Bravo, an evening with Andrew Lloyd Webber, a move from politics to performance art - "Galloways pussy premier does Broadway." Think man think. You're on a television show, people can see you and are more than happy to judge you.

Watching an episode is however strangely cathartic. It is nice to know that despite the mundane and slightly uninspired days we all have, at least we don't succumb to sharing that boredom with anybody other than those willing to actually listen. Maybe the house mates should be reminded of the whale that found himself in the wrong bit of water and ended up dead, a little metaphor for fate perhaps. Your

ing our history, it is hard to ignore the impulse to get angry and start asking questions and bringing up never ending arguments about who owns which part of Ireland's garden.

I asked students which parties they favoured. A lot of the liberal minded people were not sure which party to choose. The right wing motivated types however were very clear on who they were with and what they wanted.

After my conversations with a variety of different students with different levels of interest in politics (and understanding of the very meaning of it!), I came across an appropriate quote of wisdom from our budding politician:

"I'm up for positive, I'm up for good. I'll play ball with the good issues

is certain to score me a few extra points:

"This is the most expensive exam I've ever sat. It cost me 65 euro to get here. Please consider this when correcting."

I scrawl this with a flourish, then bolt out of the room before the final half-hour lock-in commences. It's good to look on the bright side of life, especially when one is clearly not the brightest.

river or path in this celestial circus has already been paved. The dead whale now akin to Van Gogh is flying the flag for posthumous fame.

So cut off your ear or beach yourself after a wrong turn but it's already all laid out for you. Probably best to just enjoy the ride eh pokey!

in all the parties, but you still have to stay focused with the party you chose, or basically nothing will get done. At the end of the day there's no right or wrong."

Politics: It only makes sense if you are involved.

Are you the next President?

Are you the next DITSU President – Vice President Academic & Students Affairs or Vice President Services & Trading? Have a go at our Personality Test below and see which role you are best suited for:

Tick answers A,B,C

1) Which best describes you?

- A) Outspoken
- B) Caring and Considerate
- C) Up for a good time

2) A friend comes to you with tales of trouble and woe – do you?

- A) Get someone better equipped to deal with it to talk to them
- B) Sit then down for a chat and figure out the best course of action
- C) Take them paintballing

3) How would your friends describe you?

- A) The decision maker
- B) The level headed one.
- C) The loud one.

4) When you are angry do you?

- A) Rally the troops
- B) Look at both sides of the argument
- C) Take out your aggression in the gym

5) When you are put in a tight corner do you?

- A) Talk the Talk
- B) Immediately start working on solutions
- C) Deflect to person A

6) Could you sell snow to the Eskimos?

- A) Probably
- B) Rather not
- C) I'd even throw in some entertainment

7) Do you like the limelight?

- A) Yes
- B) Doesn't bother me
- C) I thrive on a captive audience, especially one waiting for a band to come on stage

8) Are you a good negotiator?

- A) yes
- B) yes
- C) yes

9) Do you find it easy to talk to people?

- A) Yes, every age and walk of life
- B) Yes, but I find it easy to listen too
- C) Yes, but do have a tendency to talk at them

10) What kind of news interests you most?

- A) Current and political affairs
- B) Health and Education
- C) Entertainment

11) If you had to do any of the following jobs, which would you pick?

- A) Politician
- B) Lawyer
- C) Marketing Manager

12) Can you keep a secret?

- A) Usually, unless it has media value, in which case I might not
- B) I am always the soul of discretion
- C) Yes, if it involves the Rag Trip

13) Would you like to earn £24,000 next year

- A) Yes
- B) Yes
- C) Yes

14) Do you like a challenge?

- A) Absolutely
- B) Absolutely
- C) Absolutely

If you answered mostly A'S

It seems that you are a good communicator who enjoys the limelight and finds it easy to talk to people. You can also motivate groups of people when the situation arises. It would appear that you have what it takes to make a good Students' Union President. The President is the chief spokesperson of the Students' Union, representing DIT students at all levels both locally and nationally. It's not easy, but someones got to do it.

If you answered mostly B'S

You are a caring and compassionate listener, with a keen interest in health and education issues. Always willing to hear both sides of the story and look for a solution. Blimey you sound like a Vice President Academic and Student Affairs. This Vice President looks after all the welfare and educational issues that students may face during their time in DIT. You are approachable and able to pursue matters even when the going gets tough.

If you answered mostly C's

You are a born entertainer and not afraid of making others laugh! You would enjoy the diversity of the role that the Vice President Services & Trading would present, from Ents to Clubs & Societies to marketing the Union to potential advertiser/advertisers.

If you've got a good sense of humour, a thick skin and generally want to work in a Students' Union that offers the best support, services and events in the Country then call into your Union Office or visit www.ditsu.ie for more information.



dit students' union

DITSU NEEDS YOU

Student Rep needed for board of DITSU Ltd
At the December meeting of DITSU Governing Council it was decided to re-open nominations for the above position. Nominations will close at 5p.m. on Monday 6th February 2006.

This position is open to any registered student of the DIT and the election for this position will take place at the next Governing Council Meeting, which will be held on 7th February 2006 in DIT Aungier Street at 6.30p.m in room 3068.

The Board of Directors of DITSU Ltd meets approximately once every month to discuss operational issues relating to the running of the Students' Union. Typical items that are discussed at board level will include, finance, allocation of budgets, staffing matters, business development etc.

The Board comprises sabbaticals and independent professionals who offer their expertise in areas such as law, HR and accounting. All decisions taken at Board level are voted upon by all directors, which will include the Student Rep.

Each board meeting takes place in the evening and lasts between 1-3 hours. Items discussed at board level are in confidence so discretion and a mature approach to this significant role are essential.

The successful candidate will receive training for this position and a fee will be paid to them for each meeting they attend.

If you are interested please complete the NOMINATION FORM and drop the form into your local Students' Union Office by 5 p.m. on Monday 6th February 2006.

For further information on this position please contact:

Students Union
Chief Operations Department
DIT Bolton St,
Dublin 1
Tele: (01) 402 2940
Email: president@ditsu.ie

Election Nominations

DIT Students' Union Elections 2006/ 2007

NOMINATIONS OPEN

Friday 17th February at 9:00am

NOMINATIONS CLOSE

Friday 24th February at 1:00pm

Application Forms are available in your local SU Office or can be downloaded from www.ditsu.ie



dit students' union

www.ditsu.ie



Just Ask Molly

Email your questions to: compact@ditsu.ie

"This is really embarrassing but... during Christmas a load of my friends and I went out celebrating one day and by early evening we were locked"

Hey Molly,

This is really embarrassing but... during Christmas a load of my friends and I went out celebrating one day and by early evening we were locked. There was this guy with us that I've fancied like mad for ages and we ended up getting together. Well, when we were back at his we did use a condom but it split. I'm on the Pill so I'm not worried about pregnancy or anything but a week or two ago I started getting itchy down below. Now I'm freaking out that I've got something but there's no way I can go see my family GP. What am I going to do?

First of all, you tried to do the right thing and be safe by wearing a condom. It's clear that you care about your sexual health and your own health and safety. Congratulations to you.

As you know, condoms are only effective when put on very carefully. Alcohol can get in the way of this, as can over enthusiasm! This doesn't help you much now but it's something you and everyone else can keep in mind for when you're out on the town and feeling in the mood another time.

What you can do now though is get yourself checked out. This is a good thing to do since the condom split even if you weren't worried about possible symptoms (which may or may not be anything to do with what happened). In fact, if you're sexually active it's good to get a regular check up. The thing about STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) is that most of them are very easily treatable, usually with some antibiotics, but can cause irreversible damage such as infertility, if left untreated.

You can go to St. James G.U.I.D.E clinic (01 - 4162315) or to the medical centre in D.I.T's own Aungier Street (01 - 4023051). All cases are dealt with complete confidentiality. The doctors and nurses understand that you are just taking care of yourself and are getting it checked out. Be pleased with yourself for not hiding your head in the sand.

For more information about STIs and safe sex, you can call into your Students' Union or keep an eye out for the information stands in SHAG week, starting February 13th.

Hi Molly,

I just finished doing a load of exams there after Christmas. During one of my exams the supervisor's phone starting to ring and she answered it. What do you think happened next? She started having a good gossip on the phone. I just sat there in complete shock. She was standing right beside me and I just couldn't hear myself think. I tried to start writing but it was so distracting. I suppose she didn't stay on the phone for that long but it totally threw me. I really feel that her behaviour will affect my result. I'm not trying to be a complete 'chancer' here but is there anything I can do about this?

Yes there is something you can do. You can appeal your result.

There are 3 specified grounds for appealing the decision of an exam board and they are:

(i) That the General Examination Regulations of the Institute have not been properly implemented; i.e. something happened in the exam that directly conflicted with what is set out in the DIT's own agreed rules.

(ii) That circumstances exist which may not have been specifically covered by the General Assessment Regulations; i.e. a situation occurred that was not specifically covered by the Regulations; this could be something completely extreme and unforeseeable that would nonetheless affect your performance in the exam. If a builder was drilling loudly outside the window in the exam hall and you couldn't concentrate properly.

(iii) That there is new, attested, documented and relevant information, that was not made available to the Examination Board for justifiable reason, and therefore not considered (if the exam board didn't have it at the time, they obviously couldn't have considered it).

Your situation would fall well within these criteria, as a supervisor should not answer a phone in the middle of an exam.

Remember that you must appeal within seven working days of the publication of results on the Examination Notice Boards. The General Assessment Regulations is the document which governs your rights and responsibilities in this area, you can read it / download it, an information leaflet and all the forms required are available from the SU website at www.ditsu.ie

But the best thing that you can do is call into your Students' Union and talk to the Academic Affairs Department (academicaffairs@ditsu.ie) and they'll be able to direct you on all aspects of making an appeal.



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SHAG Week

13th - 17th February 2006



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Seperate Fact From Fiction With STI's

Sexually Transmitted infections (STI's) have there own myths & old wives tales. It turns out that some of these are partly true - but others are definitely false.

HEALTH ISSUES

BY DEIRDRE CODY

Do they use an umberella type thing on men during an STI screening?

This statement was particularly common during our 'safer sex' promotions on World Aids Day (Dec 1st). It is a myth shared outside the walls of the college, and I would like to reassure the men on this issue.

Did you know that all D.I.T. students can avail of a full screen for Sexually Transmitted Infections (S.T.I.'s) within D.I.T. college? We provide for all sexualities, but we notice that more females than males have had screening. This may be due to this myth, so I will attempt to make it sound attractive!!

A male screen involves:

1. Taking a SMALL swab from the tip of the penis (urethra)
2. Taking a urine sample to test for Chlamydia
3. Taking a blood sample
4. Instruction on self examination of testicles

The nurses in both Aungier Street and Linen Hall are qualified to provide your consultation and assess the urgency of your screen. The screen is carried out in Aungier St. Health Centre, Room 2051. There are male and female doctors available if you have a preference. You are screened for H.I.V., Hepatitis B, Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia, Trichomonas, Non Specific Urethritis (inflammation of the urethra). Your results are given on return visit two weeks after the screen. The D.I.T Sports, recreation and Support Council subsidise the cost (15 euros) which includes any subsequent consultation or medication for any S.T.I. diagnosed.

Chlamydia - that's the one that effects women?

This statement is not incorrect, but Chlamydia affects men as well as women. Chlamydia is a curable sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium, Chlamydia trachomatis. Chlamydia can be transmitted to a man or woman

during unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex with an infected person. It is the most common curable bacterial sexually transmitted infection in the western world, and has been diagnosed in the D.I.T health centre, with the majority of people presenting 'for a checkup, just to be sure?' ie; no symptoms. It is very important to note that at least 70% of women and 50% of men who are infected may be asymptomatic. Men may experience discharge from the penis, burning and itching in the genital area, and pain when passing urine. Please feel free to visit your health centre if you have any of these symptoms or any queries. You can also log on to www.ndsc.ie/chlamydia/factsheet for further information.

Do we need to use a condom, my girlfriend's on the pill?

Many guys and girls believe that contraception is about preventing pregnancy, unfortunately there has been limited input to education on S.T.I.'s in secondary schools in general. It is important to take responsibility for your sexual health if you decide to have a relationship. People tend to start out well, using condoms; but become more relaxed after a length of time, or if they start using another form of contraception. As we know from the information on Chlamydia as above, he/or she may look 'grand' but unless a person has a screen they don't know if they have an S.T.I. You can have an infection even if you have only had one sexual partner or a 'one night stand' without a condom. The thinking that; 'she looked grand' or 'she's a nice girl, she's not a slut' is irrelevant. In our ideal world we should all have a screen for S.T.I's before starting a relationship or definitely before deciding to stop using condoms. Six months down the line it is difficult to establish the 'who gave what to who' scenario. It is also important to remember that oral sex without a condom carries a risk of S.T.I transmission. If you would like information about contraception or sexual health come and speak with a nurse.

Phone or come along to your designated health centre & book an appointment with the nurse.

Aungier Street: (01) 402 3051
Linen Hall: (01) 402 3614

**Deirdre Cody, Practice Nurse,
Aungier St., Health Centre.**



Talking Sense with Alcohol During Well Fair Week

Resolutions for lifestyle improvements abound at the outset of the New Year. For some students, the focus is on a more balanced and consistent approach towards the study of course material. Others may endeavour to partake in activities organised by the wide selection of clubs and societies throughout the DIT.

SOCIAL ISSUES

BY ANTHONY FLYNN

One lifestyle issue that requires reflection on the part of virtually all students is alcohol consumption; or perhaps more precisely, the tendency of us all to over-indulge from time to time. With the Student Health and Well Fair on the horizon, not to mention Rag Week, a candid and pragmatic engagement with the issue of

alcohol consumption among students is certainly appropriate.

Drinking to excess, with the inevitable unpleasant consequences, is something most of us would have done, and indeed may well repeat at some stage during the future. It is however when such excess alcohol consumption, commonly referred to as binge drinking, becomes the norm for a night out rather than the exception that various problems start to surface. Consider the adverse health effects first. The liver takes approximately one hour to filter and break down one unit of alcohol – the equivalent of a pint/shot. Consuming ten-twelve units of alcohol over three or four hours poses obvious difficulty for the liver.

Furthermore, it can take several weeks for the liver to completely recover from a serious binge session. Health experts are continuously warning of the perils of regular binge drinking, particularly for young women, on future health, citing cirrhosis of the liver, diabetes, and a plethora of cancers as but some of the potential consequences.

An under-reported effect of binge drinking is the loss of time. For many Irish people the measure of a great night out is in the levels of nausea and tiredness the following morning. Yet that amounts to a considerable proportion of

your youth idled away merely nursing hangovers.

A sensible financial approach is needed just as much as an informed health approach when it comes to alcohol. The exorbitant price of drink across many of Dublin's pubs may militate against the excess consumption of alcohol for many students. For others, student status should not be viewed as an impediment to enjoying a social and drinking life on par with that of a full-time worker. This viewpoint can be quite problematic insofar as funding such a social life may entail juggling academic studies with "part-time" employment, or assuming an ever-looming debt with a bank.

With the pub serving as the dominant social scene throughout this country it is hardly surprising that alcohol related problems are forever growing, even among students.

Adopting a mature and informed approach to alcohol consumption, as advocated and promoted by the Union of Students of Ireland, not only allows you to enjoy your night out but also ensures that, for the most part, you are not left to pay a heavy price the following day!

Well Fair Week is taking place from 30th January - 3rd February.



Chris Brokaw Interview

Although probably best known for his work in bands 'Codeine' and 'Come', Bostonian Chris Brokaw has accumulated a body of work during his career that most musicians could only aspire to. The prolific musician took time out from practice in Chicago to talk in advance of his Dublin gig.

ENTERTAINMENT
BY EMMA CAWLEY

His European tour coincides with the release of his latest solo offering, *Incredible Love*, which showcases the musician's trademark fluid guitar skills, and also debuts his hesitant and hypnotic vocals. Brokaw explained how the album came together: "I guess there are three songs on the record that were originally demos. I did a series of demos in March 2004. Then I went back and re-tooled some of those and recorded another eight songs

in August and September of 2004. Everything was put down a year before it actually came out."

Incredible Love is a little rockier and more hard-edged than his previous solo work, though he views the change as a natural progression. "I was becoming more interested in rock music, after a fairly long period of not listening to any. People were also saying to me that they missed me playing rock and that I should put together a band, so I wanted to try it out."

Considering his extensive history of musical collaborations, it comes as no surprise that Brokaw was joined on the album by similarly talented friends, Jeff Goddard and Kevin Coultas. "I've known both those guys for a long time" he says. "Jeff used to play in a band called 'Karate' up until pretty recently and Kevin used to be in a band called 'Rodan'. He also played drums with my old band 'Come' for a little while and did some touring with us." The musician was enthusiastic about the group dynamic and its power to refresh material with every performance.

"We played a show in New York about a week and a half ago, and something really turned around that night, like it went from being a good band, to being a really good

band. So it's growing and getting better - it's exciting."

In the spirit of reinvention, Brokaw decided to take the album on tour alone.

"That's mostly how I've been touring for the last couple of years, playing acoustic guitar and singing. I've kind of figured out a way to make it a full-sounding experience. I really try to make the guitar sound like a whole band, and make it a little bit different from the typical singer-songwriter style."

One of the album's highlights is a reworking of Suicide's *I Remember*. The singer chose the track after seeing the band's live show. "I saw them in Boston about three or four months after the war in Iraq had started. It seemed to me that nobody was talking about it, at least in the context of the arts or music. It always seems that really big stars waste good opportunities to say something. I went to the Suicide show and they somehow turned every song into a huge anti-war protest. I was so impressed by that."

Brokaw wants his own music to 'say something' also, and refers to *The Information Age* as an example. "I can't believe as many people in my country voted for our current president, twice! Especially given that never before in human history has so much information been available. I think years from now people are going to be amazed." Upon completing *Incredible Love*, Brokaw immediately threw himself into new projects. "I'm actually in Chicago right now working on some new music with Doug Mc Holmes who plays in 'Tortoise' and a drummer called Elliot Dicks who used to play with 'The Nerves'", he says.

With such a rapid production of ideas and material I ask what the Dublin audience can expect of the gig later this month: "I think it'll be better than the first time I played at Whelan's! My first show there, two or three years ago, was o.k. But I was really only starting to play solo at that point, I was pretty new at it and I think I'm better at it now. I love playing Dublin and I always look forward to playing there."

Chris Brokaw plays Whelan's on Saturday, February 25th.
www.chrisbrokaw.com

The Perfect Pitch for the Recording Industry

Pitchforkmedia.com is a non-corporate backed music website based in Chicago and is gaining as much attention as the artists it covers. It's not often that you find a site like this these days, as the choice between the likes of MTV's site and smaller college or youth based sites cover the sphere of tastes here and in the US – or so we're led to believe.

FEATURE

BY CONOR MAGHER

Ever had the feeling that despite its plaudits your favourite site, whether it's the Guardian, MTV or NME, through which your ears are opened, has something lacking? Well then, check out pitchfork: a site for music fiends, created almost ten years ago by one Ryan Schreiber, that's dedicated to providing reviews of as much music as possible, whether mainstream, indie or other.

A quick glance at the site and you'll see reviews ranging from the likes of Kanye West to Radiohead, with plenty of complete unknowns thrown in to add balance and intrigue to the mix. The site has a proper magazine format to it, rather than the too-often almost made up title page we've seen over the years from failed sites and publications, while the contributors list is large enough to show a keen and vast spread of people who voluntarily display their musical opinions. The lack of readily recognisable sponsors can't but endear one to the site as well, with ads running tightly around the page without any pop ups or cookies or flaming banners. Each ad has a real sense of being on the page, running from guitar makers to indie clothes brands and a link to emusic, a free download site that offers one track a day reviewed on pitchfork.

Mentions of the site have been popping up across the ocean in places you'd expect, like college and independent record sites, as well as the odd hip-hop and even drum 'n' bass

blog site. Brian Boyd of the Times recently said of pitchfork: "Basically, a 9 or 9+ review on Pitchfork will get you attention, and plenty of it, from booking agents, distributors, radio etc. It's now quite the done thing in polite underground indie circles to plaster a Pitchfork endorsement sticker on your CD shrink-wrap." While Boyd was quick to point out the site's danger of being taken over by larger corporations, I wouldn't have the same worry. Having run for ten years it seems well established and adequately backed, while the fact they gave Kanye West's album a top three spot for the year 2005 can only sit nicely with the massive companies they should apparently fear.

Pitchforkmedia.com is an essential in the music industry at present. Judging by the way it's run and by the content, it's clear that the formula works and can work without corporate whoring, over-reliance on shitty everyday radio stations and badly run college blogs to give the public what they want. An Irish equivalent would be just what we all want I'd say and could be worth looking into a gap in the market here. In the mean time check out the site and some of the artists mentioned, if for no other reason than to be able to brag about who heard who first when the next Arcade Fire break out.

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